

APPENDIX 5

NMAC Guidelines for Managing Large Fixed Wing Airtankers

Strategic Principles

- Initial and extended attack fire suppression is the primary mission for airtankers.
- Airtankers will be pre-positioned based on NMAC strategic considerations and prioritization criteria as stated in the *NMAC Preparedness Strategy, 2003*.
- Assignment to large fire support will be on a case-by-case basis, after initial and extended attack objectives have been met, and if deemed cost effective. The following criteria will be used:
 1. Imminent threat to human life including occupied structures.
 2. Imminent threat to communities, community infrastructure, historically significant cultural resources, commercial businesses, and principal residences.
 3. Threats to other structures and improvements such as seasonal homes, cabins and high value outbuildings.
 4. Threats to natural resources.
 5. Threats to low value structures.
- Requests for airtankers for large fire support must include or identify the above criteria to ensure that dispatch centers can correctly allocate scarce airtanker resources.
- Incident Commanders and their operations and aviation staffs must ensure that retardant is being used wisely and judiciously with ground forces to follow up and take advantage of retardant drops.

Operational Procedures

- NICC will be delegated authority from NMAC to guide strategic deployment of airtankers.
- Unless a higher risk area is identified, large fixed wing airtankers will be initially positioned at the designated contract base in order to reduce costs.
- On the 0930 GACC/NICC conference call, daily assignments will be validated and aircraft reallocated as necessary.
- Late afternoon, as necessary, GACCs and NICC will conference on airtanker requirements and position strategy for the following day. NICC will make the final decision if consensus is not reached.
- GACCs will establish priorities when competition for airtankers exists. GACC to GACC initial attack agreements will continue to be utilized per the National Interagency Mobilization Guide (Chapter 13.1).
- When requested to make an airtanker available to move to a location of greater risk, the local unit or GACC will do so without hesitation.